

**In the Specification**

Please replace the paragraph on page 21, beginning on line 12, with the following amended paragraph:

~~Fig. 12 is a flow chart~~ Figs. 12A and 12B are flow charts illustrating an exemplary multiple-stage serial extended belief-propagation (BP) algorithm according to one embodiment of the invention;

Please replace the paragraph on page 21, beginning on line 19, with the following amended paragraph:

~~Fig. 15 is a flow chart~~ Figs. 15A and 15B are flow charts illustrating an exemplary multiple-stage parallel extended belief-propagation (BP) algorithm according to one embodiment of the invention;